

D#20 COMPLETE STREETS

SUPPLEMENTAL STAFF REPORT #3

SUMMARY: This Supplemental Staff Report provides responses to issues that were raised at a Planning Commission meeting regarding amendments to the Renton Municipal Code Development Regulations (Title IV). It also includes additional information that staff has identified as being necessary to include in the analysis for amendments.

General Description

This docket item focuses on updating current street standards in a number of areas as well as the adoption of a complete streets model. The Planning Division made this docket item request based on Highlands Task Force recommendations and in consideration of needed updates to current standards. Staff is working with an interdepartmental group (Utilities, Transportation, Fire and Emergency Services, Development Services, Community Services, and Community and Economic Development) in the review of, and update of minimum design street standards. Historically, development within street rights of way has been inconsistent, as requirements for sidewalks, planting strips, street trees, lighting, and other components that create complete streets have been deficient or nonexistent.

Planning Commission Issue: *Exemption from street lighting installation should be evaluated.*

Staff Response: Current code exempts “small projects” from installing street lighting (RMC 4-6-060.F.2.a). The threshold for new “small projects” is defined as 2-4 units of *residential*, 0-5,000 square feet of *commercial* space, or 0-10,000 square feet of *industrial* space. This current exemption is part of the proposed update. After talking with members of the interdepartmental group that have worked on this proposed update following the Commission’s discussion on this specific item, staff recommends leaving the language as is.

Planning Commission Issue: *Require a landscaped planting island within cul-de-sacs.*

Staff Response: The requirement or allowance of a planting island within a cul-de-sac varies jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Such an amenity could provide additional landscaping within the public realm to provide a greater aesthetic to a neighborhood. Additionally, such an island could be used as a stormwater low impact development (LID) opportunity within a development as recommended by various LID manuals being used in the region.

Staff recommends adding a requirement for a landscaped center island within new cul-de-sacs. Currently a paved radius of 45 feet is required by the City. Staff proposes the center island be designed with a 20 foot radius of the current 45 feet, where the left-over 25 feet around the island would be paved for emergency and vehicular movement. Text has been added to the cul-de-sac section in the proposed code changes (see Attachment A, page 9). Maintenance would fall on a homeowners’ association or adjacent property owners as written.

Planning Commission Issue: *Clarify when the minimum planting strip could be reduced for Residential Access or Limited Residential Access street rights-of-way.*

Staff Response: Staff recommends adding criteria for when a reduced planting strip width may be allowed for Residential Access or Limited Residential Access streets. One of the following three situations would have to be met to allow the reduction: a) When R-O-W acquisition is problematic; b) When the grading of natural topography is reduced; or, c) When a permanent alternative landscaped area is provided equal or greater than the allowed planting strip area reduction that is in addition to any minimum existing code requirements. The additional vegetation area from the last criteria would be in the form of a protected tract, conservation easement, or other form of dedicated area maintained by a homeowners' association.

Planning Commission Issue: *Provide Downlighting docket work for street lighting publication update.*

Staff Response: The downlighting item was a recommendation originally made by the Highlands Task Force in 2008 that the Commission worked on earlier in 2009. Staff has forwarded the downlighting information to the Transportation Division. The information will be used as that division updates the City's street lighting publication.

Planning Commission Issue: *Curb width to be included in Right-of-Way tabulations.*

Staff Response: Curbs have were left out of the right-of-way tabulations in previous attachments and are to be included. Staff has revised right-of-way tabulations to include the 6 inches on both sides of a street. For background, horizontal curb width is traditionally part of a sidewalk measurement when a sidewalk and curb are attached. This scenario occurs when there is no planting strip or landscape area between a curb and sidewalk. When there is a planting strip between a curb and sidewalk, the curb is not included in the planting strip width.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Draft Streets Standards, RMC 4-6-060
- Attachment B: Draft Streetscape Images